



Name of Property: Scout's Rest Ranch Headquarters
City, State: North Platte, Nebraska
Period of Significance: 1886–1913
NHL Criteria: 1 and 2
NHL Theme: II. Creating Social Institutions and Movements
4. recreational activities
III. Expressing Cultural Values
2. visual and performing arts
6. popular and traditional culture
Previous Recognition: 1978 National Register of Historic Places
National Historic Context: XXXIV. Recreation
B. Spectator Pastimes/Wild West Show Movement

NHL Significance:

- Scout's Rest Ranch was the primary home of William F. "Buffalo Bill" Cody, the frontiersman turned showman who created the Wild West entertainment movement of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.
- Cody also conducted Wild West business at Scout's Rest Ranch, including purchasing, training, and stabling horses; signing contracts for new performers; and allowing the use of the ranch for performers to rehearse.
- So compelling and engaging was Buffalo Bill's Wild West that it inspired more than one hundred imitator shows, spawned the modern rodeo, and influenced the motion picture industry. The movement influenced—and continues to influence—how the entertainment industry, mass media, and popular culture present the history of the American West.
- Scout's Rest Ranch bore an enduring connection to Buffalo Bill's Wild West and to Cody's public persona as frontiersman and family man. The ranch, promoted in Wild

West show programs, was a powerful piece of publicity and propaganda that illustrated how Cody carried out his role as frontiersman and domesticator, not just in the arena, but in his private life.

Integrity:

- The five historic buildings comprising the Scout's Rest Ranch headquarters area (ranch house, barn, and outbuildings) have experienced few alterations other than restorative work since the period of significance.
- The State of Nebraska has preserved the landscape features of the irrigation system, lawns, and trees as much as possible to their historic appearance.
- Overall, the contributing resources of the headquarters area retain a similar appearance to the time of Buffalo Bill Cody's ownership.

Owner of Property: State of Nebraska

Acreage of Property: 8.25 acres

Origins of Nomination: The Oklahoma State Historic Preservation Office requested an assessment of NHL eligibility for the Pawnee Bill Ranch, which initiated a special study of Wild West Shows by the Heritage Partnerships Program in the NPS Regional Office in Denver. As a result of the study, Scout's Rest Ranch was identified as the best property associated with the Wild West Show movement, in addition to its association with the movement's creator, William F. "Buffalo Bill" Cody. The NPS Denver Regional Office subsequently contracted for the preparation of an NHL nomination.

Potential for Positive Public Response or Reflection on NHL Program:

- National Historic Landmark designation of the Scout's Rest Ranch Headquarters would recognize an area of United States history that has received little attention in the NHL Program, the creation of the Wild West entertainment movement of the late nineteenth century. As the precursor to the modern rodeo and western-themed motion pictures, the Wild West show will be familiar to most Americans, along with its creator, William F. "Buffalo Bill" Cody.

Potential for Negative Public Response or Reflection on NHL Program: None is known.

Public Comments Favoring Designation (received as of September 9, 2020):

- James N. Douglas, Director, Nebraska Game & Parks – 1/11/2019

National Historic Landmarks Committee Comments:

- Add information about the landscape, setting, and views and their contribution to the integrity of the property.
- Discuss the conflicted story of the Wild West Show and Cody's relationship to Native Americans and African Americans in his show.
- Identified issues regarding certain design elements, supporting maps, and additional



biographical information, which will be addressed in the revised nomination.

National Historic Landmarks Committee Recommendation:

The Committee recommends that the National Park System Advisory Board recommend to the Secretary of the Interior the designation of the Scout's Rest Ranch Headquarters in North Platte, Nebraska, as a National Historic Landmark, with any additions and corrections as noted by the Committee being made prior to the nomination being forwarded to the Secretary of the Interior for action.

Advisory Board Recommendation: